

Lexington City Schools
Return to School Health and Safety Plan
Phase II and III



1) Planning to reopen

- a) Establish a COVID-19 team within the school division and a point person at each school facility.

The LCS COVID-19 division team consists of: Mrs. Rebecca Walters, Division Superintendent; Mr. Jason White, Director of Operations and Student Services; Dr. Abbott Keese, Principal of Lylburn Downing Middle School; Mrs. Melanie Camden, Principal of Harrington Waddell Elementary School; Mrs. Rebecca Poulsen, Nurse of LDMS; and Mrs. Brittney Campbell, Nurse of HWES.

The contact person for each building is as follows: LDMS- Abbott Keese; HWES - Melanie Camden; LCS - Jason White.

- b) Know the contact information and procedures for reaching the local health department.

LCS administrators have met with and communicated with the local health department. Division administrators have collaborated with our appointed health department liason for K-12 and higher education, Ms. Amanda McComas, and Dr. Laura Kornegay. Contact information is below:

amanda.mccomas@vdh.virginia.gov

540-332-7830 ext. 322

540-290-3005

- c) Plan for health and absenteeism monitoring/approaches.

LCS will monitor student absenteeism with previously established protocol. Should the rate of absenteeism increase in any school or across the division, the division attendance contact (Jason White) will be made aware. Consultation with the local health department will help guide next steps.

In order to monitor employee health and absenteeism, LCS has put the following protocol into place:

- Division administration will inform employees that they should contact Human Resources to discuss circumstances that may impede their return to on-site work performance.

-HR will meet with any individuals who identify high-risk factors or barriers to return to work.

-Provide accommodations, modifications, supports, and/or alternatives to on-site work as determined appropriate per the individual needs. (Options may include: teleworking, modified job duties, and virtual instructional opportunities)

*- LCS will develop **Employee Return to Work Guidance** within the **COVID-19 Employee Handbook** to provide guidance to all employees related to recommended health and safety precautions to take before and during work, expectations for health and safety while at work, to include appropriate use of PPE, and engagement with visitors and the public.*

*-LCS will develop **Employee Absence and Notification Requirements** within the **COVID-19 Employee Handbook** to include a continuum of notification and action steps required related to a tiered list of identified health concerns.*

-LCS will require employees to self-monitor for symptoms prior to reporting to work each day.

d) Develop a communications strategy that includes:

- i) Orientation and training for staff and students specific to new COVID-19 mitigation strategies;
- ii) Plans for communication with staff, parents, and students of new policies;
- iii) Plans for how to communicate and outbreak or positive cases detected at the school.

*As part of the completion of the COVID-19 Mitigation Health Plan by the LCS COVID-19 team, a **Health Procedures Summary** document has been developed. This document will serve as the foundation for all communication regarding health mitigation strategies for employees, students, and parents. Training will be provided to staff upon return to school during teacher work weeks. Documents will be distributed to students and parents prior to the students' return and training will occur for*

students once they return to school in-person (Phase III). This information will be made available through several communication platforms including: School System/School Websites, Division Alert Call Platform, links posted on social media platform, local media, and/or USPS.

Finally, we will follow standard operating procedures to notify families of an outbreak and a subsequent school closure through the platforms mentioned above. For single positive cases, school nurses will make direct contact with parents.

e) Participate in community response efforts:

LCS Director of Operations and Student Services, Jason White, has participated in weekly virtual meetings with local agencies to include VDH, Local EMS (Rockbridge County, Lexington, Buena Vista), Local Law Enforcement (same localities), Local Government Administrators (same localities), and other local organizations. These meetings are no longer happening weekly, but instead, are as needed for the time being. Mr. White is in constant contact with the emergency management official for the city of Lexington, Mr. Trent Roberts, fire marshal.

f) Prepare your division's student health services:

LCS will review all current health policies and procedures to ensure alignment with CDC, VDH, and VDOE guidelines as well as recommendations from the Virginia School Nurse Association and American Academy of Pediatrics. Changes to these policies will be presented to the Lexington City School Board for approval. Nurses will develop a plan to train all health services staff and other appropriate staff to address any health concerns or safety needs while remaining in compliance with all of the guidelines and recommendations. This includes nurse-led training that educates staff on signs and symptoms, changes in policy, and what staff should do in the event they suspect illness in an individual.

g) Assure provision of medical-grade PPE for health services staff;

Medical grade PPE will be provided to nurses at both schools. Each school nurse will receive four sets of medical grade PPE. Additional PPE will be stored at LCS and made available to schools to replenish as needed. School nurses will be required to maintain three sets of PPE on

hand at all times. Medical PPE will be available to other office staff in the event there is an emergency and the nurse is not available.

- h) Assure and maintain typical (non COVID-19) health services;

LCS will continue all typical health services as usual. To prevent exposure to students who may be sick, medications and first aid will be delivered in a separate space from where sick children will be attended to. Lay staff trained by school nurses will be designated to assist should a sick child require isolation to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19. Individual healthcare plans will address COVID-19 for students with health needs.

- i) For the provision of mental health services.

LCS has developed a plan to implement Tier I trauma-informed practices, including morning class meetings and evidence-based SEL curricula in all classrooms. Training on these programs will be provided as needed prior to the first day of school. More severe mental health needs will be referred to school counselors and administration. All staff will be trained on mental health awareness by the Rockbridge Area Community Services Board prior to the start of school. Referrals to local mental health services will continue as normal, including accessing emergency services through the local Community Services Board and FAPT-funded services.

2) Promoting Behaviors That Reduce Spread of COVID-19

- a) Create an education/training plan for staff, students and families. Consider COVID-19 prevention education (hand washing, staying home if ill, etc.). Education should be part of staff and student orientations and to be sent to all parties before reopening schools and include:
 - i) Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette,
 - ii) Use of cloth face coverings,
 - iii) Staying home when sick,
 - iv) Encouraging physical distancing.

LCS will provide training for all staff and students on personal hygiene practices that prevent the spread of COVID-19, such as hand washing and covering coughs. This training will be completed by division level

personnel for all staff, and by classroom teachers for all students immediately upon their physical return to school (Phase III). Resources with this information will be sent home for students and families to review prior to the first day of school.

Cloth face coverings will be required for all staff and students who are physically able to wear them at all times while in the school building. Staff will not be required to wear a cloth face covering when working alone in their classroom/office. Staff and students will not be required to wear a cloth face covering while eating or while outside while maintaining physical distance. Designated “mask breaks” will be offered during outside time and “no talk” instructional times. LCS will provide each staff member with a clear face shield, clear face mask, and will have other cloth face coverings available to staff if requested.

All staff, students, and stakeholders will be educated on the importance of staying home when sick and maintaining social distancing practices. Lesson plans, modeling and skill-practicing will be used to ensure that staff and students understand and practice these preventative behaviors. Vinyl floor markings will be installed and signage will be displayed to create a visual reminder of appropriate physical distancing in hallways and other areas of the school where appropriate.

- b) Maintain adequate supplies to promote healthy hygiene.

The Director of Operations and Student Services will maintain records of supplies. The director will work with various vendors to ensure adequate quantities of cleaning and disinfecting products are in stock and available for use in division facilities.

- c) Provide signs and messaging to promote healthy hygiene.

LCS will provide age appropriate signage and materials to all facilities to promote healthy hygiene. Materials will be posted in the entrances, hallways, classrooms, food service areas, restrooms, clinics and other areas as deemed appropriate by the building principal or site supervisor.

- d) Promote physical distancing.

- i) Modify layouts of classrooms, communal areas, and buses to ensure social distancing is maintained.

Classroom layouts have been modified to create 6 feet of physical distance between students. The “diamond technique” is being utilized to maximize space, while also adhering to proper entry and egress routes. Ancillary furniture has been removed and placed into storage for the time being. Floor markings will be installed in communal areas to create a visual of distancing requirements. Congregate gatherings will be eliminated and/or modified during Phase III to meet guidelines. Staff will monitor students moving throughout the building when travel is necessary. The LCS activity bus (we do not provide school bus transportation) will be used for only those families who need transportation. This will allow us to keep our numbers at a manageable level to adhere to distancing guidelines.

In order to minimize risk during arrival and dismissal times. Multiple entry and exit points will be utilized. Student dismissals will be staggered in time, to prevent large groups during these times. Students and staff will be required to wear face coverings during arrival and dismissal.

- ii) Develop strategies for food/dining services; these should be consistent with plans to optimize physical distancing.

During Phase III, meal selection will be limited and all meals will be prepared and packaged in covered containers by staff. All meals will be in compliance with USDA regulations. For students participating in in-person instruction, meals will be delivered to the classroom for students in grades 3 and up. Students in grades K-2 will receive meals in the school cafeteria in a similar manner. Volume of students will be lower than guidelines, and physical distancing will be adhered to. Disinfecting will occur before new groups of students use the facility. LCS is exploring options for meal distribution and take home options for meals-eligible students who are 100% virtual.

- iii) Limit size of gatherings consistent with Executive Orders and impose strict physical distancing during gatherings.

Outdoor Facilities: 10 feet of physical distance and no more than

250 people.

Indoor Facilities: 10 feet of physical distance and no more than 250 people.

- iv) Follow relevant Virginia Phase Guidance for Schools and CDC guidance for recreational sports for school-related sports and other recreational activities.

Coach/Sponsor Requirement

- *Coaches/Sponsors must provide a detailed Health Plan to their Principal/Designee outlining how they will meet the criteria as indicated in the LCS Health Plan. The plan must follow guidance as set forth by the CDC and VDH before being allowed to start any activity.*
- *Scheduled use of the facility must be approved by the Principal.*

VHSL Physical Requirement

LCS requires all students to have a valid VHSL physical form in order to participate in athletic conditioning and team athletic programs. The physical form must be dated after May 1, 2020 to be valid for the 2020-2021 school year.

Outside Organizations

During Phase III the use of LCS facilities by outside organizations will be considered on a case-by-case basis following state and local guidelines, with approval made by both the division superintendent and a VDH representative.

Cleaning and Sanitation

Cleaning supplies will be provided to staff to ensure equipment is cleaned after each use.

Routine cleaning by custodians will be scheduled to occur each day for frequently touched surfaces and high volume areas.

3) Maintaining Healthy Environments

- a) Plan for daily health screening questions of staff and students.

LCS will provide a screening tool to parents, students, and staff for a home health assessment prior to staff and students reporting to school. Staff and students, or students' parents where age appropriate, should assess themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 before reporting to school. The screening will consist of the following:

Answer Yes or No: Since my last day in the building, have I had any of the following:

- *A new fever (100.4 or higher) or a sense of having a fever?*
- *A new cough that cannot be attributed to another health condition?*
- *New shortness of breath that cannot be attributed to another health condition?*
- *New chills that cannot be attributed to another health condition?*
- *A new sore throat that cannot be attributed to another health condition?*
- *New muscle aches (myalgia) that cannot be attributed to another health condition or specific activity (such as physical exercise)?*
- *Congestion or runny nose?*
- *Nausea or vomiting?*
- *Diarrhea?*

If an individual answers YES to any of the screening questions before arriving at school, they should stay home and not enter the building. If an individual reports having COVID-19 symptoms upon arrival, the school will activate COVID-19 protocols. If an individual has any of these symptoms, students and staff are required to notify the school nurse as soon as possible.

b) Hygiene Practices:

- i) Create cleaning and disinfection protocols that include frequently touched surfaces; transport vehicles; schedules for increased cleaning, routine cleaning, and disinfection; ensuring adequate cleaning supplies and correct use/storage.

Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and sprayed with an approved EPA List N disinfectant. Food service areas will be sanitized utilizing solutions that are approved for use in those areas.

- Door handles, sinks, toilet handles, etc. will be cleaned with a sanitizing solution on a regular basis.

-Water fountains will be disabled for the time being. Filling stations will remain in use.

- Areas that are frequently touched by students and non cafeteria staff in food service areas will be sanitized between each rotation of students. Food will be pulled from the line and the area will be cleaned in accordance with VDH and USDA guidance.

-Student Desks:

-Elementary students will stay in their homeroom class and will not change classes/desks to minimize the mixing of groups. Desks will be cleaned daily after use.

-Secondary students will be cohorted into small groups to minimize mixing of groups. 85-90% of students will not need to move to other classes during the day. Teaching and support staff will move from classroom to classroom. The small percentage of students who will move will have their own desk in the classroom. Desks will be cleaned daily after use.

-Transportation: The bus driver and custodial staff will sanitize student areas between each run and daily at the conclusion of the last run. Driver areas will be sanitized daily at the conclusion of the last run. LCS does not offer door-to-door bus service, rather a shuttle run from school to school. This will be limited to only those students who aren't able to find other means of transportation. LCS will assign a staff member to serve as a bus aide to help ensure physical distancing while on the bus.

-Principals will develop cleaning schedules for routine cleaning as appropriate for their buildings. High volume areas and congregate restrooms should be disinfected at least once per hour. Each school will have a fogger machine to assist with disinfecting practices in a timely manner.

-Custodians will notify the Director of Operations of needed cleaning and sanitizing supplies, who will requisition those supplies

from vendors.

-Director of Operations will ensure building level administrators, custodians, and transportation specialists are trained in the proper usage and storage of cleaning and sanitizing supplies.

- ii) Provide additional hand sanitizer/handwashing stations.

LCS has purchased and installed additional hand sanitizing stations for high volume areas (entrances, cafeterias, computer labs, etc.) in both schools.

- iii) Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing to the extent possible (e.g. dedicated student supplies, lab equipment, computers, etc.).

School staff will secure needed supplies in order to ensure one-item-per-student where at all possible. Technology devices will be ordered so that every student in the division has their own device to use in the classroom (and at home should virtual instruction be requested and/or necessary).

- c) Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible.

LCS partners with an HVAC contractor on an annual basis. The Director of Operations will communicate with personnel from the company (Honeywell) to ensure systems are working appropriately, as well as to increase the fresh air percentage as much as possible.

- d) Ensure that water systems and features are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.

The Director of Operations will work with City of Lexington maintenance staff to flush and inspect all water systems at school sites.

4) Maintaining Healthy Operations

- a) Implement protections for staff and children at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

All students with health needs will have these risk factors addressed as part of their Individualized Health Plan. Safety practices, such as personal hygiene and social distancing, will be implemented for their protection. Screening practices and provision of masks, as well as considerations for modified sick leave and/or work assignments will be made available to all staff. Virtual learning options will be made available for students whose families feel this option provides a better alternative for their health needs. Individual staff concerns regarding health/wellness and job requirements will be handled on an individual basis.

- b) Align plans for gatherings, field trips and volunteer restrictions consistent with any Executive Order in place.

Classroom occupancy, group gatherings, recess, and all other activities will maintain six feet of physical distancing. There will be no gatherings over 250 people, with a goal of a maximum of 50 people whenever possible. LCS will not allow any field trips until conditions permit such. Parents, tutors, and other non-essential visitors to the school will not be permitted until further notice. University practicum and student teaching assignments will be allowed according to division and university guidelines, and those individuals will go through the same health screening processes as staff members.

- c) Implement sick leave policies and practices that enable faculty, staff and students to stay home or self-isolate when they are sick or have been exposed.

All LCS employees will follow the health and safety protocol outlined in the COVID-19 Employee Handbook, to include protocol for identifying symptoms and risk of possible exposure. This document provides all employees with guidance to determine the need to stay home, self-isolate, and/or to communicate with their physicians to seek medical direction or assistance. According to VDH and CDC guidance, if a student or staff member falls in one of the categories below, they must follow the included protocol before returning to work/school.

- i) *Confirmed or clinically suspected case of COVID-19 by medical professionals - A 10-day minimum isolation period is required. In addition to this period, At least 24 hours have passed since*

resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and, Other symptoms have improved.

- ii) *Exposure to a medically confirmed case of COVID-19 - 14 days of quarantine are required AFTER the last contact with the confirmed case. (Hypothetically, one could potentially have to quarantine for 24 or more days).*
- iii) *If a suspected case of COVID-19 is confirmed to be negative by medical professionals - Students or staff can return to school/work after being fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and symptoms have improved.*

LCS will provide information to all employees outlining additional sick leave benefits and extended FMLA benefits corresponding to the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. LCS will provide additional information to further expand awareness and to educate employees regarding their rights associated with this Act.

Students will be required to stay home for 24 hours hours after a fever has subsided without using fever-reducing medications and symptoms have improved. They will not be allowed to participate in school-based activities or remain in contact with others if they display symptoms of respiratory illness or any COVID-19 symptoms. These symptoms will include:

- Fever over 100.4**
- Cough** that cannot be attributed to another health condition
- Shortness of breath** that cannot be attributed to another health condition
- Fatigue**
- Muscle or body aches** (myalgia) that cannot be attributed to another health condition or specific activity (such as physical exercise)?
- New loss of smell or taste**
- Sore throat** that cannot be attributed to another health condition
- Congestion or runny nose**
- Nausea or vomiting**
- Diarrhea**

- d) Train back-up staff to ensure continuity of operations.

LCS is broadly recruiting substitute employees to increase the availability

of staff to ensure continuity of operations across departments. All current and newly hired substitutes will be provided with targeted professional development to ensure that they are prepared to seamlessly transition into their role as a substitute employee. Additionally, LCS is including all paraprofessionals in professional development activities planned for teachers so that they may transition into those roles in a substitute capacity as necessary.

5) Protecting vulnerable individuals (e.g. 65+, underlying health conditions):

- a) Create policy options to support those at higher risk for severe illness to limit their exposure risk (e.g. teleworking, modified job duties, virtual learning opportunities).

Division administration will inform employees that they should contact Human Resources to discuss circumstances that may impede their return to on-site work performance.

The LCS Human Resources Department will communicate with all individuals who respond affirmatively to determine the nature of their risk factors or barriers to return and provide accommodations, modifications, supports, and/or alternatives to on-site work as determined appropriate per their individual needs. (options will include: teleworking, modified job duties, and virtual instructional opportunities)

LCS developed a COVID-19 Employee Handbook to provide guidance to all employees related to recommended health and safety precautions to take before and during work, expectations for health and safety while at work, to include appropriate use of PPE, and engagement with visitors and the public.

LCS developed a COVID-19 Employee Handbook, to include a continuum of notification and action steps required related to a tiered list of identified health concerns.

LCS will require employees to complete a health screening protocol before reporting to work each day. The results of the individual health screen will be reviewed and documented by the school nurse.

- b) Implement flexible sick leave policies and practices that enable faculty, staff and students to stay home or self-isolate when they are sick or have been exposed.

All LCS employees will follow the health and safety protocol outlined in the COVID-19 Employee Handbook, to include protocol for identifying symptoms and risk of possible exposure. This document provides all employees with guidance to determine the need to stay home, self-isolate, and/or to communicate with their physicians to seek medical direction or assistance.

LCS has provided information to all employees outlining additional sick leave benefits and extended FMLA benefits corresponding to the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. LCS will provide additional information to further expand awareness and to educate employees regarding their rights associated with this Act.

- c) Develop policies for return to class/work after COVID-19 illness.

Employees who have tested positive and have had COVID-19 may return to work when they meet ALL of the following criteria and have coordinated their return to work with their immediate supervisor:

- 10 day minimum isolation period and no fever for 24 hours (without the use of medicine that reduces fevers), and*
- Other symptoms have improved for 24 hours without the use of medication (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), and*
- Your healthcare provider has provided written confirmation that you may return to work or school.*

Students who have tested positive and have had COVID-19 may return to school activities when they meet ALL of the following criteria:

- 10 day minimum isolation period and no fever for 24 hours (without the use of medicine that reduces fevers), and*
- Other symptoms have improved for 24 hours without the use of medication (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), and*

-Your healthcare provider has provided written confirmation that you may return to school.

6) Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

- a) Separate and isolate those who present with symptoms.

Each building will have a dedicated space for students who present with symptoms of COVID-19 that is separate from areas that may be used regularly. This area will not be used for any other purpose at any time and will be disinfected after use. Staff who assess or care for sick children will be provided with PPE that includes N-95 fitted masks, gown, face shield and gloves.

- b) Facilitate safe transportation of those who are sick to home or healthcare facility.

Parents will be responsible for picking up their sick child. Parents will provide school administration with several emergency contacts who can pick up the student if they are unavailable or who can reach the parent in the event of illness. Staff members will provide the main office with emergency contact information in the event the staff member needs safe transportation to home or healthcare facility. Should a student or staff member present respiratory distress or medical symptoms that require acute care, emergency services will be notified to transport the child or staff member to the hospital.

- c) Implement cleansing and disinfection procedures of areas used by sick individuals.

When an individual becomes sick or presents with symptoms of COVID-19, custodial staff will be notified immediately. All areas that the individual has come in contact with will be disinfected using EPA-registered disinfectants applied by trained staff. Classrooms where suspected cases are present will be cleaned and disinfected immediately while all students and teachers in the room are temporarily relocated to another area of the school. If possible, the room may be closed for at least 24 hours for cleaning and disinfection.

- d) Develop a communications plan with the local health department to initiate public health investigation, contact tracing and consultation on next steps.

LCS has been assigned our appointed health department liason for K-12 and higher education, Ms. Amanda McComas. The School Nurse or designee will make the initial contact, and if not present, the building Administrator will do so. Per VDH, all suspected cases of COVID-19 should contact their family physician by phone to determine next steps and potential testing. School staff will be able and willing to facilitate this contact should a parent need assistance.

7) Planning to close down if necessary, due to severe conditions.

- a) Determine which conditions will trigger a reduction in in-person classes.

Should the community transmission rate increase, LCS will collaborate with community partners, including the Central Shenandoah Health District, to limit in-person activities and transition students to virtual learning and/or Phase II restrictions. LCS will stay in compliance with all CDC guidelines and consult with VDOE and VDH as needed. The size of the class, extent of social distancing in place while the ill persons were present and infectious, extent of interaction and exposure in the area, and location of the case(s) in the class will be assessed to determine the potential risk to others. Recommendations will be based on these assessments of risk and how instruction can continue in as safe a manner as possible.

Areas of the school where ill individuals spent time while infectious might need to be closed temporarily for cleaning and disinfection while unaffected areas continue to function as usual. Decisions about closure of a section of the school or the entire school will depend on the number of ill persons who have been sent home for a period of isolation and the number of exposed contacts who have been identified and placed into quarantine. The extent of the school facility and teaching staff affected by these factors will be a factor in determining whether educational services can continue to be provided. In the case of an insufficient number of staff, schools will be closed.

- b) Determine which conditions will trigger complete school or division closure.

Should the community transmission rate increase, LCS will collaborate with community partners, including the Central Shenandoah Health District, to limit in-person activities and transition students to virtual learning and/or Phase II restrictions. LCS will stay in compliance with all CDC guidelines and consult with VDOE and VDH as needed.

Decisions to close a school or schools will be made on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with our local health department. The size of the class, extent of social distancing in place while the ill persons were present and infectious, extent of interaction and exposure in the area, and location of the case(s) in the class will be assessed to determine the potential risk to others. Recommendations will be based on these assessments of risk and how instruction can continue in as safe a manner as possible.

*LCS may decide to close a school or schools for deep cleaning and revert to 100% virtual instruction if a school does not have enough workforce to operate. Should a significant percentage of staff and/or students self-report COVID-19 symptoms with self-screenings, LCS **may** close schools (or areas of the school) for up to 72 hours, or as long as recommended by VDH. In addition, this data will be reported to the Central Shenandoah Health District for ongoing consultation.*

- 8) Overnight boarding schools should consult the Virginia Higher Education Reopening Guidelines and [guidelines for Congregate Settings](#) for additional information and recommendations.**

Not Applicable